



# MENTAL WELLNESS

## Program Philosophy

At Operation Recovery, we recognize the critical impact of mental health and wellness. Since the withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan we have continued to see the impact on the veteran population and moral injury. One of our initiatives is to improve our veterans and first responders' health, wellness, social and emotional well-being by connecting, sharing experiences, and contributing to meaningful change.

We promote awareness around issues such as mental health, physical health, and impact of moral injury by providing resources, tools and external support. To meet our goal of improving the resilience of veterans, first responders, volunteers, and international allies, strengthening families and our communities.

Operation Recovery has created this resource for personal use, in addition to sharing with others. To see additional resources, check out the [OpReco Initiatives](#).

***Disclaimer:*** *These are third-party resources. Operation Recovery does not accept responsibility or liability for the contact or use of these resources, nor claims association and/or affiliation with any resources or entities listed.*

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## What are you doing to care for your wellness and health?

Self-care & wellness looks different for everyone. Finding what works best for you is key. Here are a few ideas and tools to help practice self-care and promote wellness. Small acts in daily life can have a big impact on physical and mental health!

**Remember you are never alone!** Free resources are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week! Ready to be on the way to enhanced self-care? Celebrate Mental Health month in May, and every day by choosing something from the toolkit, watching a video, or listening to a podcast to celebrate with us. Self-care is the key to resilience. When you are practicing regular self-care you are able to care for others and respond to stress when you are feeling your best.

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### 5 Key Factors for Wellness

- Environmental Wellness
  - [NIH Environmental Wellness Checklist \(PDF\)](#)
- Emotional Wellness
  - [NIH Emotional Wellness Checklist \(PDF\)](#)
- Physical Wellness
  - [NIH Physical Wellness Checklist \(PDF\)](#)
- Social Wellness
  - [NIH Social Wellness Checklist \(PDF\)](#)
- Disease Prevention
  - [NIH Disease Prevention Checklist \(PDF\)](#)

### 5 Areas of Self-Care

- Physical
- Emotional/psychological
- Social
- Spiritual
- Intellectual/mental



## How to Practice Self-Care

Learn more about [caring for your mental health here](#).

- **Get regular exercise.** 30 minutes can help boost mood & improve health.
- **Eat healthy, regular meals and stay hydrated.**
- **Make sleep a priority.** Reduce blue light exposure from 30 minutes before bedtime.
- **Try a relaxing activity.** Try out a relaxation app, wellness program, journaling, meditation, or breathing exercise.
- Set goals and priorities. Be mindful of what you have accomplished at the end of the day, not what you have been unable to do.
- **Practice daily gratitude.** Reflect on positive moments in your day, write them down at night.
- **Focus on positivity.** Be mindful of your thoughts, and be purposeful in your thought process.
- **Stay connected.** With friends, family, and in your community.

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## When in doubt, reach out! When to Seek Professional Help

**Seek professional help if you are experiencing severe or distressing symptoms that have lasted 2 weeks or more, such as:**

- Difficulty sleeping
- Appetite changes that result in unwanted weight changes
- Struggling to get out of bed in the morning because of mood
- Difficulty concentrating
- Loss of interest in things you usually find enjoyable
- Inability to perform usual daily functions and responsibilities
- Excessive fears, worries, and anxieties or prolonged sadness or irritability.
- Substance abuse
- Social withdrawal



**If you are having suicidal thoughts, please seek help immediately.**

**You are never alone, there are services available 24/7.**

- If you or someone you know is struggling or having thoughts of suicide, call or text the [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](https://www.988lifeline.org) at 988 or chat at [988lifeline.org](https://www.988lifeline.org).
- In life-threatening situations, call 911.
- Additional information about suicide prevention at NIMH's Suicide Prevention webpage.
- [Veterans Crisis Line](https://www.18002738255.com) - Dial 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1 to talk to someone or send a text message to 838255 to connect with a VA responder. Confidential online chat sessions at Veterans Crisis Chat.
- [National Suicide Prevention Hotline](https://www.nationalsuicidepreventionhelpline.org) at 988 or 1-800-273-TALK (8255) to connect with a trained counselor
- For support outside of the US, a worldwide directory of resources and international hotlines is provided by the [International Association for Suicide Prevention](https://www.internationalassociationforsuicideprevention.org).
- Additional international support by [Befrienders Worldwide](https://www.befrienders.org).

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## OpReco Opportunities

Learn more about what the Operation Recovery team is doing to combat stress and moral injury, and encourage resilience within the military, veteran, first responder, and U.S. ally populations. Check out the [Operation Recovery Initiatives](#) for more information.

- [Shotgun Shoot](#) – October 21st, 2023 hosted at Tampa Bay Sporting Clays, in Tampa, FL
- [Surf Fire Sessions](#) Learn more about our Surf Fire Sessions and witness the power of connection and community.



## Self-Care Resources

Check out the resources for additional ideas and techniques to practice self-care. There is no one correct way to practice self-care. Find what is right for you. Here are a few highlights that you may find helpful when it comes to practicing self care and wellness.

### BOOKS:

- [The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma](#)  
- by Bessel van der Kolk, M.D.
- [The Compassion Fatigue Workbook](#) - by Françoise Mathieu
- [In an Unspoken Voice: How the Body Releases Trauma and Restores Goodness](#)  
- by Peter Levine
- [Trauma Stewardship: An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others](#) - by Laura Van Dernoot Lipsky and Connie Burk
- [Waking the Tiger: Healing Trauma](#) - by Peter Levine
- [Widen the Window: Training Your Brain and Body to Thrive During Stress and Recover from Trauma](#) - by Elizabeth Stanley

### APPS:

Please note some apps may require subscriptions.

- [Aura Heath](#)
- [Belly Bio - Apple devices only](#)
- [Breathe for Apple](#) // [Breathe for android](#)
- [Calm](#)
- [Headspace App](#)
- [Insight Timer](#)
- [Mood Mission](#)
- [PTSD Coach](#)
- [Sanvello](#)
- [Take a Break! By Meditation Oasis](#)
- [Quit Now for Apple](#) // [QuitNow for Android](#)



## COMMUNITY RESOURCES, HOTLINES, & CHATS:

- [988 Crisis Lifeline](#) - Call/Text, or use the [Lifeline Chat](#)
- Call [211](#) for local resources
- [Afghan Resource Center](#) from USA Hello
- [Befrienders Worldwide Hotline](#)
- [National Suicide Prevention Hotline](#) Call: 988 or 1-800-273-8255 (Veterans Option 1)
  - [Chat](#) or +Text: 838255
- [Crisis Text Line](#) - Text: HOME to 741741 (will connect you to a crisis counselor)
- [Disaster Distress Hotline](#) - Call/Text: 1-800-985-5990
- [George W. Bush Institute's Veterans Wellness Alliance](#) - Call: 630-522-4904
- [Headstrong](#) - Get Help - Check out the [Intake form](#)
- [National Helpline - Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's \(SAMHSA\)](#)
  - Call: 1-800-662-HELP (4357) - SAMHSA [online treatment locator](#).
- [National Alliance on Mental Illness](#) - Call: 1-800-950-NAMI (6264)
  - Email: [info@nami.org](mailto:info@nami.org)
- [National Child Traumatic Stress Network](#)
- [Project Refit](#) - with chat option and [Group sessions](#) (Weekly every Mon/Fri)
- [Professional Quality of Life](#): Self-Care tools & practice options manage self-care.
- [SAMHSA's Disaster Distress Hotline](#) - Call: 1-800-985-5990

## INTERNATIONAL RESOURCES

- [International Association for Suicide Prevention Hotline](#)
- [Befrienders Worldwide Hotline](#)
- [Doctors without Borders Medical Care](#) - Phone: +1(212)679-6800
- [Disaster Care](#) - Medical Advice & Crisis Counseling
- [Dugri](#) - Mental health
- [Emergency Ishkar](#) - Medical Aid

## RESOURCES FOR AFGHANISTAN:

- [US Committee for Refugees & Immigrants](#)
- [USA Hello - Afghan Resource Center](#)
- [#AfghanEvac Coalition](#)



## RESOURCES FOR VETERANS:

### Wellness Resources for Veterans

- [TAPS Military Survivor Helpline](#)
  - Call/Facetime: 1-800-959-TAPS (1-800-959-8277)
- [Vets4Warriors](#) Call: 1-855-839-8255
  - Chat option on website – Email: [vets4warriors@ubhc.rutgers.edu](mailto:vets4warriors@ubhc.rutgers.edu)
- [Veterans Affairs \(VA\)](#) & [VA National Center for PTSD](#)
- [Veteran Crisis Line](#)
  - [Find a Provider for Veterans](#)
  - [Burn Pit Registry](#) - Help Desk Call: 1-877-470-5947
    - For more info about airborne hazards and burn pit hazards [click here](#).

### Benefits for Veterans:

- [Apply for VA health care](#)
- [VA eBenefits](#)
- [Transfer Educational Benefits](#)
- [TRICARE Eligibility](#)
- [Byte Dental Resources Guide for Veterans](#)
  - For more information, [click here](#).

### Education & Employment:

- [Transition and Economic Development](#)
- [Tuition Assistance](#)
- [GI Bill Comparison Tool](#)
- [Skill Bridge](#)
- [Joint Special Operations University](#)
- [Elite Meet](#)

### Additional Resources for Veterans:

- [SOCOM Warrior Care Program](#)
- [PTSD Coach - App](#)
- [PTSD Bytes - Podcast](#)
- [DoD's DHA Connected Health](#)
  - [Center for Deployment Psychology](#)



## ONLINE TRAINING:

- [Field Guide for Barefoot Psychology by Beyond Conflict](#)
- [Freedom Oigong hosted by David Burch](#)
- [Psychological First Aid from Johns Hopkins University](#)
- [The Resilience Toolkit from Lumos Transforms](#)
- [Resource Guide for Coping with Secondary Trauma from Social Work License Map](#)
- [SE Crisis and Stabilization Toolkit from Somatic Experiencing](#)

## PODCASTS:

- [Always Forward Podcast](#)
- [Brain Body Resilience Podcast](#)
- [How to be a Better Human Podcast](#)
- [Millennial Mental Health Channel](#)
- [The RESILIENCE Podcast](#)
- [Road to Resilience](#)
- [Tara Brach on Apple Podcast](#)

## VIDEOS & AMBIENT MUSIC:

- [20 Minute Guided Meditation for Reducing Anxiety & Stress](#)
- [Astral Ambient Meditative Soundscape](#)
- [Daily Routine to Fight Off Depression](#)
- [Guided Wim Hof Method Breathing Video](#)
- [Helpful practices for managing stress and anxiety from NIM](#)
- [Happiness Frequency Music - Sleep Guided Music](#)
- [Positive Transformation Frequency Music](#)
- [Remove Negative Energy - Sleep Music Edition](#)
- [Tree of Life Meditative Soundscape](#)
- [Yoga For Neck, Shoulders, Upper Back](#)
- [Yoga For Hips & Lower Back Release](#)

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*“What you do today can improve all your tomorrows.” – Ralph Marston*

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